

The Sun AND NEW YORK PRESS

FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 1918.

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Entered at the Post Office at New York as Second Class Matter.

Subscriptions by Mail, Postpaid.

One Year, \$10.00. Six Months, \$6.00. Three Months, \$3.50. Single Copies, 10 Cents.

ADVERTISING RATES. Daily, \$1.00 per line. Sunday, \$1.50 per line. Special rates for long term contracts.

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given us time to measure ourselves against the necessities of the crisis in which our lives are thrown. We have learned what we can and what we cannot do. We are competent to our task, and when the second anniversary of General Pershing's arrival in Paris is reached the full significance of our course will be apparent, not only to ourselves, but to all others.

Settle the Railway Contracts.

Failure of representatives of the stockholders and the National Railroad Administration to agree upon the form of contract between the Government and the carriers is disturbing to investors and cannot be satisfactory to the public. This deadlock, as we understand it, is by no means the fault of the Government. It is not the fault of the major and self-supporting roads. It appears to be chiefly the fault of some worked out railroads.

The whole question centres upon the meaning of the rental which the Congress act taking over the roads provided should be the three year average of net operating income. Now, it is a fact that this average net income of some roads was not only artificially but scandalously high. For the purpose of holding up stock market prices or for other reprehensible reasons the management of some roads skinned their properties to the bone so as to be able to pay dividends they otherwise could not have paid.

In a neighboring State, for example, there are two parallel railroads, one of which is rich and powerful. It always has ploughed into the property tens and tens of millions of its earnings. Keeping up its roads, its equipment, its supplies of all kinds in magnificent condition, it has never paid its stockholders more than normal dividends. The management of the other road, on the contrary, has paid high dividends, abnormally high dividends, but to do so has skimmed the property on everything. The plain truth is that under the old private management or under the new Government management this particular railroad and others like it could not have continued on that way for long without failing to pieces in financial and operating wreck.

If good railroads are to continue to put a right and necessary share of their earnings into upkeep, as they always have done, railroads which never have done this ought to be compelled to do it. It makes no difference whether the roads are going back to the stockholders or not. If they are going back it is to the best interest of the stockholders not to have them go back as junk. If they are not going back it is to the best interest of the public to have them converted from junk into railroads.

There may be room for argument as to what is a proper rental basis for all railroads. But there is no room for argument as to the proposition that the first obligation of any railroad to the public, to its stockholders and, in present circumstances, to the Government, is to put a fair share of its earnings into the maintenance of the property.

The settlement of this contract matter cannot be delayed without mischief to the general railway situation and to the general railway stockholder. On it depend the bond subscriptions and income tax payments of some, and the bread and butter of other stockholders waiting upon the contracts for their dividends. Speed up the contracts!

The Vice-Chancellor Elaborates the Middle Europe Doctrine.

The Imperial Vice-Chancellor of Germany, Dr. Friedrich von Payer, has restated the doctrine of Mittel-Europa in the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna and the *Vossische Zeitung* of Berlin, two strong defenders of German military aggression. The principles are those earlier announced by Friedrich Naumann and, elaborated with each additional mile of conquered territory occupied by German soldiers, accepted by Admiral von Tirpitz and the Fatherland Party as a sort of national fetish.

Dr. von Payer has taken the demands of these extreme militarists, backed by Prussian Junkers, the Crown Prince and the German officers represented by the General Staff, as a definite policy for the Central Powers. His conception is no longer a Middle European domination, but a world control, a broadened vision resulting from the crushing of Serbia and Rumania and the exaction of territory that offers promise of a German mastery over Russia. He apparently accepts as an accomplished fact the domination of Berlin in Austria-Hungary and Russia, the subservience of a reestablished Polish kingdom, the subjection of the Balkan countries and the vassalage of the Ottoman Empire.

The compact, already rather unwillingly signed by Austria-Hungary as amends for a too ready discussion of peace terms, is considered "inadequate." It "must not depend continually on the feeling of the moment," for "the union must be so intimate that the idea of separation practically would be out of the question." With such a compact in operation could there be any doubt as to which would have the controlling voice, Berlin or Vienna?

The place in the scheme of other states named by the Vice-Chancellor and which are to "enhance enormously" its value either has been fixed or is in process of being fixed. The "northern border states," by which is meant the Baltic provinces of Lithuania, Estonia and Finland, erected into states with German princes as dynastic heads, and the new kingdom of Poland, are to be "allied to the Central Empire." A German Ukraine has already been established, the supports of the Don

Cossack and Crimean regions are in German hands, the Transcaucasus is partly in the occupation of the "glorious ally," Turkey, and the reduction of northern Russia is under way. The conquest of Rumania has been acclaimed as the accession of practically a new province under German rule. The recent treaty with Turkey and Bulgaria converts them into states subject to Berlin's rule and dictation. The evident intention is entirely to obliterate Serbia; for the agreement with Bulgaria promises her Macedonia, the valley of the Morava and a common frontier with Austria-Hungary.

Dr. von Payer's all embracing plan of this region, which he assures us must be on "broad lines and effected quickly," is:

"All must finally become a great united region of intercourse with uniform interests. Concurrently with the gradual disappearance of customs duties and frontiers, there must be unification or a far reaching rapprochement of economic legislation, especially trade and industrial tariffs and the care of labor. Certain forms of indirect taxation must be outlined similarly, and railways, waterways and other means of communication must be made to serve the common interests."

But there is evidently some latent fear existing in the mind of the state builder, a fear impressed by "experience in the present war" which have shown him that "similar training in armaments, equipment and supply systems" facilitate the conduct of war. He accordingly adds:

"Political cooperation must be supported by an understanding on military questions. If the states are bound together by a treaty of protection, they must bear proportionately the burdens of this protection and all would then have an identical interest in the simplification and appropriate extension of military institutions."

Cleared of unnecessary verbiage and reduced to thoroughly intelligible language this means that Germany shall furnish equipment, arms and military supplies to all these states, that she shall drill and train the armies and have the general control and command of them. In fact, all of these vassal states are to supply Germany with an army to control the world.

The beneficent condition that would follow this iron rule of German arms is thus set forth by Dr. von Payer:

"The peace of Europe will then rest in the hands of a united Germany and Austria-Hungary, and will be in good hands."

By way of illustration the Vice-Chancellor might add that in July, 1914, the peace of Europe was in those "good hands." Four years of world war and lamentable horrors were the result.

Our New Rations.

The deficiency in our customary beef ration imposed by the latest regulations and appeal of the Food Administration, which reduce householders to a pound and a quarter of clear beef a week for each person, may easily be supplied by increasing the consumption of pork products, of which there are sufficient to assure an adequate supply of food for all. The beef stringency comes at a time when persons engaged in sedentary occupations customarily reduce their consumption of red meat; that reduction might in many cases be made much more drastic without impairment of health or loss of vigor. Indeed, in numerous instances elimination of beef from the diet would produce excellent effects.

Men and women engaged in manual labor require a heavier ration, and the exercise their employments entail will permit them to eat pork products without danger to health. Last year's great corn crop is now available in the form of pork, and the ancient prejudice against pork as a hot winter food is only a survival of the days when refrigeration was unknown, or at best was for the rich alone. Now properly preserved meats of all kinds may be had by all, and a judiciously constructed bill of fare including friend pig in any of his palatable manifestations is attractive, nourishing and satisfactory.

Beefless days mean no real hardship. Even if they did, we should endure them gracefully, for every man deprived of his favorite cut would realize that he sacrificed it only for the benefit of a soldier, a sailor or a civilian whose lot is far worse than anything the experience of most of us has held.

Modification of the Sherman Law.

While the main business now in hand is the winning of the war, and it is not worth while to join with the doctrinaires in discussing the reform of the world which is to follow victory, there are some considerations concerning the future which ought to be kept in mind. One of these was suggested by former Ambassador Gerard, when he told the New York Board of Trade and Transportation on Wednesday that "if the Sherman anti-trust law is allowed to stay we can never compete with European countries after the war."

In Germany, and in England also, successful business methods have been devised which eliminate destructive competition without creating monopolies. Mr. Gerard advocates such modification of the Sherman law as will permit the adoption of similar business methods in this country. It is obvious that we could not carry on the war effectively if American railroads had to be operated to-day under the principles of the anti-trust legislation on the statute books. It is only because the railroads have been placed under a Director-General, who may disregard those principles in order to increase the war power of

the Government, that we have been able to transport troops and supplies to the seaboard in number and quantity sufficient to render timely aid to our allies abroad. If enforceable against the Government, the Sherman anti-trust law would have paralyzed our transportation service.

Indeed, as soon as it became certain that the United States must enter the war it became equally plain that unless the restrictions imposed upon great business operations by anti-trust legislation were removed or ignored we could not perform our part in the struggle with credit or success. The conduct of a great war involves the conduct of a multitude of kinds of business; and the Administration soon found it necessary to do things which the Department of Justice had been prosecuting individuals and corporations for doing only a few months before.

We do not undertake to say at this time precisely how the Sherman anti-trust law ought to be modified to insure American business prosperity after the war; our point now is that the experience of the Government itself, in carrying on the imperative activities demanded by our participation in the great defense against Germany, confirms Mr. Gerard's view that the country cannot prosper under the Sherman law as it is.

To Polyflox.

Put down a red mark to the Senate's credit for introducing the word "Polyflox." Here we have pussyfooting with characteristics more subtle even than silence. If one pussyfoots, well and good; he does not disturb, and it may reasonably be argued that only those engaged in evil doing or suffering from nerves ought to those who come upon one noiselessly. The pussyfooters may have no objectionable purpose in pussyfooting. He may even be amiably determined not to distract one engaged in pondering a painful problem, as whether it is better to earn an income and be taxed, or to escape both and play golf. But, as we understand it, to polyflox implies a sly purpose. An angel child possesses of a chunk of ice, with its lovely orbs fixed on the inviting space between its papa's neck and collar, will polyflox even if it never heard of the word.

There is much in the contemplation of politics which make to welcome the verb "to polyflox."

On Broadway or in the Bois de Beloe, this is Flag Day.

A million acres, even to American ears accustomed to hearing of vast expanse of land, sounds like a good bit of territory. It surprises then to learn from the British War Cabinet report recently issued for the year 1917 that while in that year there was an addition over 1916 of 1,000,000 acres in the United Kingdom under grain and potatoes, "there is now good reason to expect that in 1918 the tillage area in the United Kingdom will exceed that of 1916 by over 3,000,000 acres." If the United States would do as well proportionately it is possible that American might, if they cared to renew acquaintance with all wheat flour bread.

General von Stein's conservatism in merely insisting that General Foch has no reserve army is amazing. He should also have assured the Reichstag that there is no General Foch.

Working on some principle they have discovered in Hun nature, the more patriotic the name of a new society founded by Germans in this country the quicker the Secret Service men put it out of business. A frankly named Hindenburgbund might escape molestation as too honest to be really German.

We do not wish to disrupt any plan the Shipping Board may have arranged for the order of selection of names of Congressmen for application to its growing fleets, but if any of the boats are to be driven by pneumatic power we have a little list which might be moderately useful.

The faithful Karl Rosner describes the Kaiser as appearing "in radiant health, bronzed and bright eyed." His Majesty is curiously immune from the diseases which malnutrition visits upon his people at home.

Many good things may, we earnestly hope, result from the visit of Mexican journalists, but none better probably than the plain language used by the President in his speech to the visitors, especially if it helps, as it should, to a clearer Latin American understanding of this country's unselfish purpose in entering the war.

LENITY TO PRO-GERMANS.

So Long as They Are Tolerated We Must Expect Trouble.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: Lecturing three or four times a week to various organizations such as military camps, high schools, churches, Y. M. C. A. branches and others, I emphasize this fact:

So long as our courts will accept bail on any arrested for disloyalty, just so long will German propaganda be flourishing here. Besides, just so long as conversation in German can be held over the telephone, long distance and local, just so long will German conspirators be able to conspire.

Are we or are we not at war?

JONAS LIPPMANN.

WASHINGTON BRIDGE, June 12.

Louis the Sanitary Engineer.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: In last Sunday's *Sun* I read Mr. Whitehead's letter. What an expense, what a labor, to run pipes for twenty miles out to sea! Instead of consulting a mechanical engineer I propose to him to let a chemist think over the problem. No one ever thought of the way that came to me after two minutes reflection. It is feasible, however, a professional chemist must receive the job. His idea of valves is impossible. Does he know the force of the ocean twenty miles out from land? With my idea working the old pipe system need not be disturbed. The best inventions are those which require the least expense to make practical.

LOUIS M. EISENHART.

Supreme Spirit of the Sphere.

New York, June 12.

SEQUENCE, UNITY, PLOT, ACTION!

Reform, Fiction Writers, Lest the Gallery Throw Things at You.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: Your correspondent "The Old Fashioned Reader" is not alone in deploring the shrinkage of values that has taken place in modern fiction. There are others.

His analysis of the cause is correct in part. There is, however, a very glaring factor of deterioration which might be traced to the present. I refer to the eternal strut of the ego, as indulged in by many writers. How often we wish that the author would leave us alone with his story. His interruptions are far more aggravating than the same of fiction would be from a conversational pen.

Especially obnoxious is the verbal acrobat who comes up along to a convenient bench which he has carefully placed somewhere in the path of his plot.

"Sit down," he commands. "Now pipe it." "I'm going to show you the real thing."

Then he does a juggling act with his vocabulary, or touches off some pretty pinwheel, to the complete abandonment of his story.

Another possible error of construction can be found in the prevailing method of introducing the characters. The writer's excursion on a chapter which is only a branch line. After taking about four locals he eventually arrives at some junction where he climbs on the through express.

True, it has been done by the best authors of all times, but constructively it is all wrong. Even in the drama, where we are to be humbugged, they do not get away with it.

For a while the film writers thought they could paste in a section here and there, but they soon found that sequence was not the answer, and they were by no means immune.

To say that a plot must flow may sound correct, but it is difficult to locate a word more expressively. After all, plot is only another word for action, and it ought to move in, enough to push a wave of interest in front of the page you are reading.

No writer ever finds time to caper before his reader when under the domination of an energetic plot. Fiction holds its place and always will because it is imagination's playground. "Tell me a story," is one of childhood's first requests. Far back down the ages the teller of strange tales found a welcome at court or camp.

And the reason is plain. Fiction is the only reality. Cinderella remains the same. She may change her costume as a concession to national custom or in accordance to the dictates of geographical necessity, but she has always retained the handsome prince and always will.

Life alone sports with fate and change. Here there is a dearth of princely suitors and few bed of roses. "A state of flux," cries the pessimist.

Hence my desire to know what happened. How did it all turn out? Likewise my impatience with an author who dares flout his personality.

Had indeed was that day when the gallery gods deserted the drama, for the movies. They were quick to sense the critical moment. Unashamed to express their approval. Long before the villain met with his just deserts, they knew he was in for it.

Let the writers of fiction take notice. A night's stroll in the gallery, even after they have arrived to man's estate. Those venturesome scribes who would waste knee deep in the metaphysical pools should have a care as to how they pluck their pet ideas and slogans. They want to remember that the average reader is not a student of the drama, for the movies. They were quick to sense the critical moment. Unashamed to express their approval. Long before the villain met with his just deserts, they knew he was in for it.

A splendid illustration of its value was recently given when, during the great Red Cross drive at the Metropolitan Opera, the audience was asked to contribute to the relief of the war-torn peoples who were seated on the stage.

"Here is a boy from California. How much am I offered?" "Twenty-five dollars," shouted a pleased citizen of that State.

It was a riot. Thousands of dollars were raised. The audience was in a state of excitement. The boy was a hero. The money was a gift. The audience was a crowd. The boy was a hero. The money was a gift. The audience was a crowd.

There is, however, a word just as dear to the heart